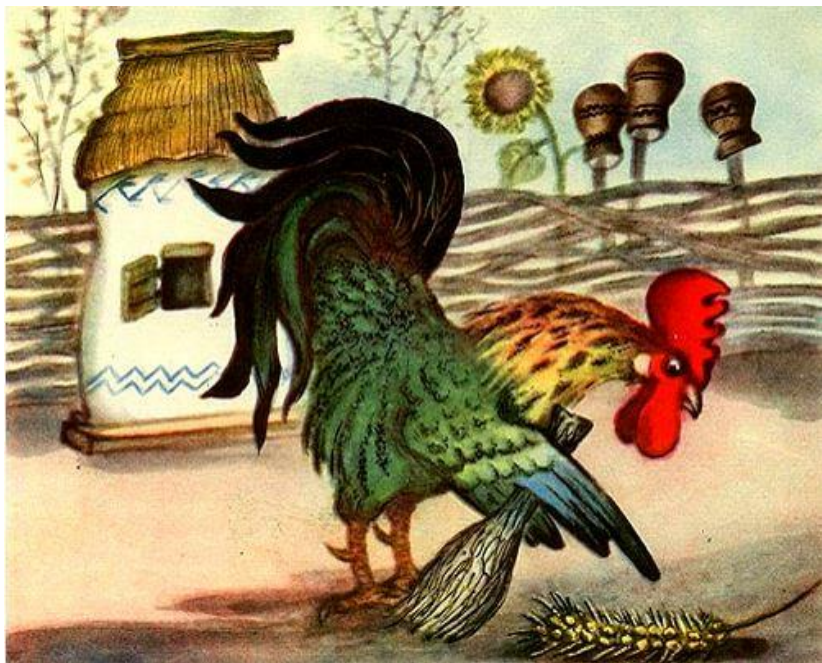
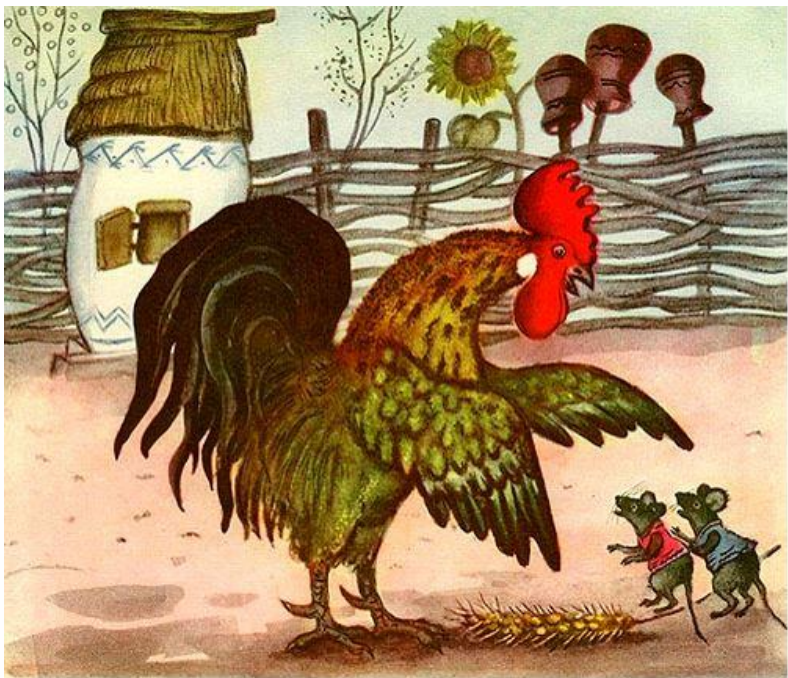


There once lived two young mice, Hurry and Scurry by name, and a cock named Silver Throat. The two mice spent all their time dancing and singing, while the cock always got up before dawn, woke everyone with his song and set to work.



One day he was sweeping the yard and found a wheat stalk.



"Come, Hurry, come, Scurry, see what I have found!" he called.

The mice, who had been playing games in the yard, came running.

"The stalk has to be threshed," said they.

"Who is going to do it?" asked the cock.

"Not me!" said Hurry.

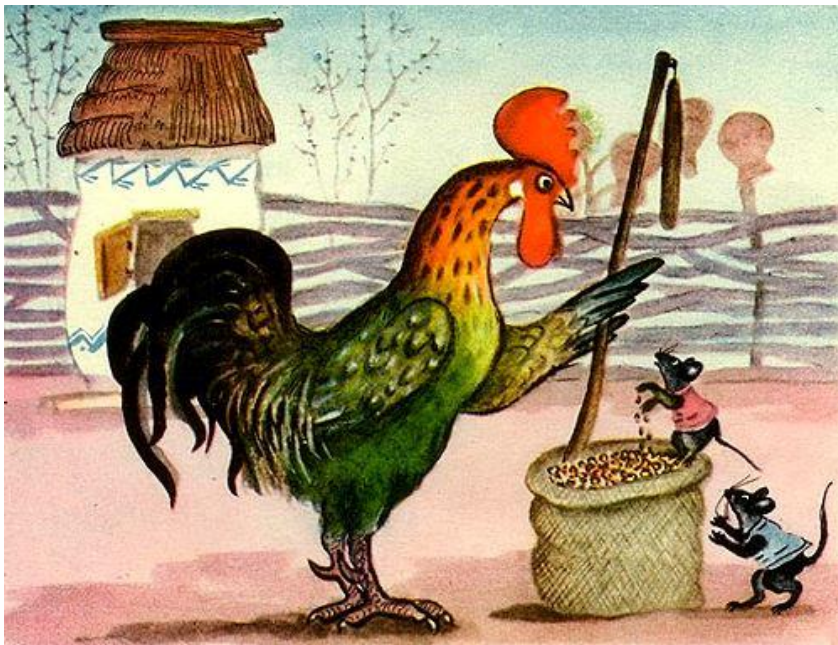
"Not me!" said Scurry.





"Well, then, I'll do it myself," said the cock.

He set to work, and Hurry and Scurry went back to their games again.



Silver Throat threshed the stalk and called to the mice:

"Come, Hurry, come, Scurry, look at the grain!"

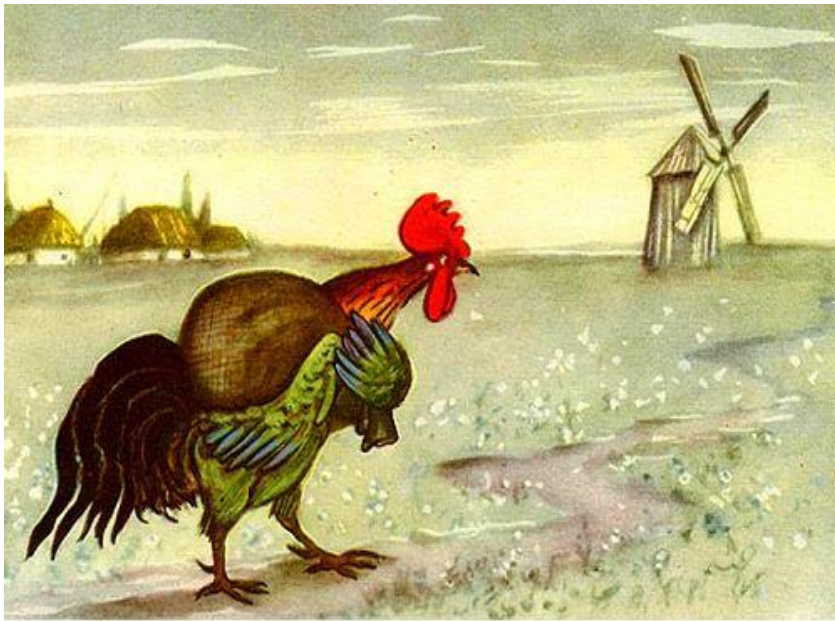
The mice came running.

"The grain must be taken to the mill and ground into flour," said they.

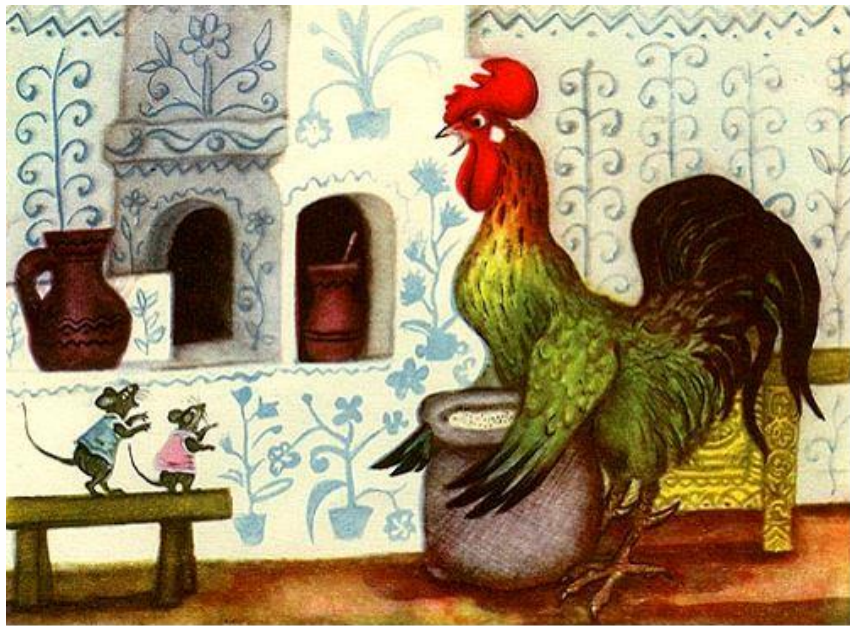
"Who is going to take it there?" Silver Throat asked.

"Not me!" cried Hurry.

"Not me!" cried Scurry.



"Well, then, I'll do it myself," Silver Throat said, and he threw the bag of grain over his shoulder and set out for the mill.



And the mice went on hopping and skipping about and playing leapfrog.

By and by Silver Throat came home and he called to the mice:

"Come, Hurry, come, Scurry! I've brought the flour."

The mice came running.

"Now the dough has to be mixed and the pies baked," said they.

"Who's going to do it?" Silver Throat asked.

"Not me!" piped Hurry.

"Not me!" piped Scurry.

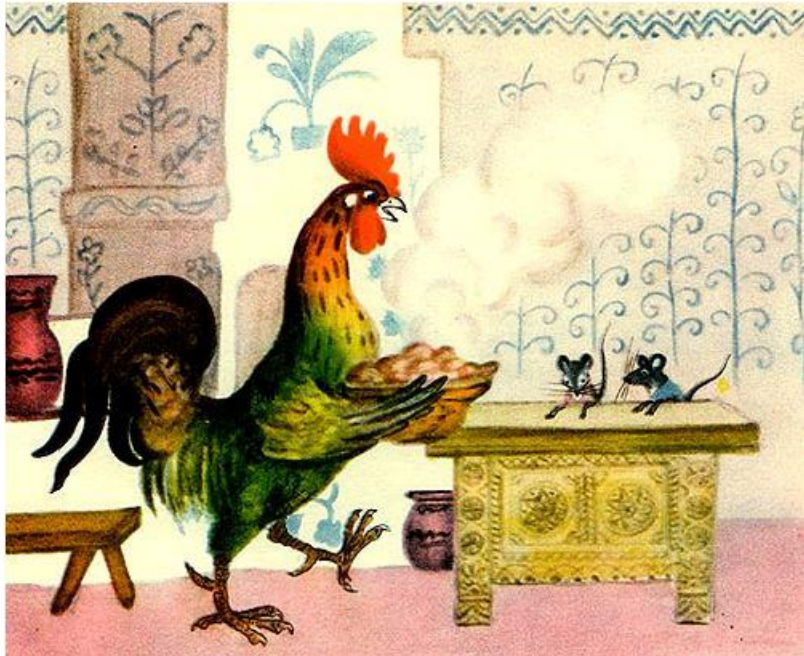
Silver Throat thought it over.

"Well, then, I'll have to do it," he said.





He mixed the dough, brought some wood, lit the oven, and when it was nice and hot, put the pies into it.



And the mice went on dancing and singing.

When the pies were baked, Silver Throat took them out of the oven and set them on the table.

The mice did not wait to be called but came running.

"Oh, how hungry I am!" said Hurry.

"Oh, how hungry I am!" said Scurry.



Translated by Irina Zheleznova

Illustrated by Y. Vasnetsov

And they seated themselves at the table.

"Wait, wait, not so fast!" Silver Throat said. "First tell me who found the wheat stalk."

"You did," said the mice.

"And who threshed it?"

"You did," they said in a smaller voice.

"And who mixed the dough and lit the oven and baked the pies?"

"You did," they said in a very, very small voice indeed.

"And what were you doing all this time?"

The mice were silent, for they did not know what to say. They climbed down from the table, and Silver Throat did not stop them. They were lazy mice who deserved nothing so nice as a pie!